

# PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

## YEARLY MEETING

OF

## CONGREGATIONAL FRIENDS, 32

HELD AT WATERLOO, N. Y.,

From the 4th to the 6th of Sixth month, inclusive, 1849.

WITH AN APPENDIX.

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## PROCEEDINGS, &c.

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### MINUTES, &c.

At a Yearly Meeting of Congregational Friends, held, by adjournments, from the 4th to the 6th of the Sixth month, inclusive, 1849, at Waterloo, Seneca county, New-York, in conformity to a Basis of Religious Association, adopted at a Conference held at Farmington in the Tenth month last.\*

THOMAS M'CLINTOCK and RHODA DE GARMO, were appointed to serve the Meeting as Clerks.

Epistles were received and read, from the Annual Meeting of Friends, held at Green Plain, Clark county, Ohio, in 10th month, 1848; from Goshen Half-Year Meeting of Friends, who have adopted the Congregational order, held in 4th month last, at Zanesfield, Logan county, Ohio; and one from a number of brethren and sisters, members of Ohio Yearly Meeting—all expressive of sympathy and Christian fellowship with us in our present movement. Their contents were truly encouraging and instructive. Mary Ann M'Clintock, Oliver Johnson, Rhoda De Garmo, William Barker, Miles S. Griswold, Azaliah Schooley, William S. Dell, Susan Doty, Margaret Pryor, and Margaret Schooley, were named to produce to a future sitting, essays of answers to them, and also to address any other meetings or religious bodies they may deem expedient.

The subject of issuing an Address from this body, relative to various prominent evils which exist in the community, calling for reform, and something expressive of our sympathy with those engaged in the benevolent labor of promoting reforms; also, a me-

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\*See Appendix.

morial to Congress in regard to Slavery, and to the Legislature of this State on the subject of Capital punishment, and the perfect recognition of the Rights of Woman, obtained our deliberation. Sarah Merritt, Stephen Estis, Nicholas Hallock, Ruth Dugdale, Elias Doty, John M. Moore, Joseph A. Dugdale, Oliver Johnson, James Truman, Thomas M'Clintock, Ezak Wilbur, Reuben P. Mosher, Elmor Hoag, Israel Lisk, Myron W. Jenkins, William Barker, and Miles S. Griswold, were appointed a committee to prepare suitable documents for consideration at another session.

Then adjourned to the 11th hour to-morrow morning.

5th of the month. The meeting convened agreeably to adjournment.

The following Epistles were read and adopted, and directed to be signed by the Clerks, and forwarded to their respective destinations, viz :

*To Green Plain Annual Meeting of Friends.*

*Beloved Friends.*—The kind Epistle addressed to us by your recent Yearly Meeting, has been read in our Assembly. Your noble standard of Christian duty receives our heartfelt homage. To your earnest and fearless testimony against the gigantic sins of Intemperance, Slavery, and War, the highest and holiest principles of our nature ardently respond. Your spirit of confidence in the ultimate triumph of Truth, inspires us with renewed courage and joy; and we need not assure you, that your expression of affectionate regard and sympathy is most gladly and cordially reciprocated.

Although “after the way which men call heresy” worship we the God of our fathers, we find peace and a serene joy in such worship, which bring with them the assurance that we follow not “cunningly devised fables,” and we are more and more desirous that we may feel and inculcate the superior beauty and holiness of a practical religion—of endeavoring to live a life harmonizing with the precepts of Jesus, and in which the love of the Father shall be manifested by kindness and love shown to his children—compared with sectarian dogmas and theological beliefs.

Our meeting has been a season of great spiritual pleasure and improvement. The subjects of War, Slavery, Intemperance, Capital Punishment, and the Rights and Wrongs of Woman, have obtained our earnest and serious attention. The entire unanimity

which has prevailed, calls forth our gratitude to the Great Spirit of Peace and Truth.

We have been delighted and cheered by the presence of several Friends from abroad, whose sentiments of lofty piety and lives of daily beauty have long been enshrined in our memories. Joseph A. and Ruth Dugdale from your own beloved society, have strengthened us by their hopeful spirit, and warmed us with their appeals in behalf of Christian dignity and freedom. Oliver Johnson has gladdened us by his presence and sympathy—co operating heartily with us in our labors for the promotion of peace on earth and good will among men. Nicholas Hallock, too, of the New York Yearly Meeting, has come to us with the energy of Divine Truth, striking for the slave with unshackled hands, and animating us by his judicious and feeling counsels. Lucretia Mott, whose lips have been touched anew with the hallowed fires of liberty and love, has aided to dispel the dark clouds of the popular Theology, and set forth the sublime precepts of the gospel, so simply and impressively as to inspire many hearts with fresh devotion to duty.

We have memorialized Congress on the subject of Slavery, our state Legislature on that of Capital Punishment, and we have recommended the circulation, the following winter, of petitions for the elevation of woman; and trust, in view of her present inferior position, you may also feel called to action in her behalf.

With feelings of deep affection, we are your friends.

Signed by direction of the Yearly Meeting of Congregational Friends, held, by adjournments, from the 4th to the 6th, inclusive, of the sixth month, 1849, at Waterloo, New York.

THOS MCCLINTOCK, { Clerks.  
RHODA DE GARMO. }

*To Goshen Half-Year Meeting of Friends.*

*Beloved Friends.*—While reflecting upon your fraternal Epistle, we are led to feel, that the hand of fellowship therein extended, has united us in brotherly love.

We partake of your heresy, and if by the worship of God, is understood cheerful obedience to the laws of his beautiful Creation, then is our union consolidated by the assimilation of a fundamental principle of our nature.

Though, as intimated, few in number, the consciousness that your association is already organized for the promotion of practi-

cal righteousness, strengthens our resolution in the pursuit of man's highest good, and you may be assured of our co-operation in any movement for the attainment of this end. We are also sensible, that the progressive tendency of our nature meets with too little sympathy or encouragement from the mass of mankind; for which reason they are disposed to rest on the present imperfect basis of Society, regardless of the improvement of which all human organizations are susceptible. Therefore it is rather a matter of sorrow than of surprise, that the multitude suspect our motives, and condemn our movements, in our aspirations after a higher order of things.

While engaged in the amelioration of the condition of mankind, the more radical our exertions, the more productive of the end sought; hence if we would remove any of the social evils, it is necessary to strike deep at their root or causes, though it should expose us to the violence of sectarian bigotry, anathema, and reproach. If we examine carefully these evils, we can but be convinced that they are the legitimate consequences of our present social organization, and flow from it in streams that may be checked for a while, but which in the end, are sure to break the strongest barriers and spread wide desolation. For the tendency of this state of society is to generate individual selfishness, destructive of those genial relations among mankind, the observance of which only can effect harmony and order in the world. It encourages a diversity of interests, and conflicting pursuits, which tend to develop man's evil passions, and set him at variance with his brother. The immediate result of this is discord—*withering, world-wide discord*—over which no reign of peace is possible forever. If it were possible to bring light out of darkness, then might we hope, by some good influence, to eliminate harmony out of this universal discord. But as the prophet has declared the one an absurdity, so is the other an impossibility. The conclusion, therefore, is forced upon us, that a thorough re-organization of Society, more in harmony with *Man's* nature and relations, has become necessary for us and all.

Wedded to our individual ideas of reform, some of us may be slow to admit this as a fact. But when we see the offspring of our present forms is the collision and strife of opposing interests; when we realize how these array man against man, and class against class, we discover the germ of War which covers the bat-

tle-field with the dead ; of oppression, wherein the strong enslave the weak ; of the moral degradation of intemperance, which is forced upon the individual in the absence of sympathy and kindness ; of that bloody legislation which takes the life it cannot restore ; of assuming a prerogative over Woman, which belongs only to her and our common Parent ; of vast monopolies which reverse the order of nature, and make the producer the slave of the consumer. And when we perceive how these germs are thoroughly incorporated with, and become part and parcel of, our present social system, producing an ever increasing harvest of fruits, which the Philanthropist can in any possibility only partially remove, we must more and more perceive the necessity of a reconstruction of the social elements of our nature. It is true, that the reformatory movements for these social evils, originate in pure benevolence, and effect no little good. Far be it from us to overlook the merit of any reform, however partial it may be ; for we believe that the final end and result of all these movements, is to be the accomplishment of this great work.

And while we are impelled by our conceptions of the importance of deep radical measures, to address you thus, we are also impressed to ask for the most feasible method, for the most natural and direct means of realizing our hopes.

We are sorry that the circumstances will not permit our entering into an examination of this point at the present, but would earnestly commend it to your serious consideration, and hope in future to be edified by your deliberations and counsel.

We return you the hand of fellowship, feeling that the light that is in you will have its effect in approaching that blessed estate to which we all aspire. Signed, &c.

The meeting having been engaged in attention to various subjects of interest, then adjourned till to-morrow morning at 11 o'clock.

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6th of the month. Pursuant to adjournment the meeting assembled.

The following Memorial to Congress was united with, directed to be signed by the clerks and forwarded, viz :

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the U. S. of America in Congress assembled. The Memorial of the Yearly Meeting of Congregational Friends, held at Waterloo, Seneca County, New York, by adjournments, from the 4th of the 6th month to the 6th of the same, inclusive, 1849.

In the language of earnestness, yet in the spirit of kindness

and love, we would conjure you, to take into consideration the subject of human freedom. The spirit of the age is animating millions of our fellow beings with heroic valor against oppression. We are familiar with the uprising of masses and the destruction of thrones.

Open, then, your ears to the wailing of millions in our own land, whose only crime is the color God has given them, and who are deprived of the rights which belong to universal human nature, the common gift of a common Father—and who, with that deprivation, are subjected to indignities and agonies, from which every fibre of man's soul, in its normal action and Divine instincts, recoils with horror. We entreat you, in the name of humanity, to set your faces against this horrible homicide—American Slavery.

We feel that its outrages are terrible; that it is a demoralizing system of blood, blasting every soil that it marks with its footprints.

We are religiously concerned to memorialize for its immediate abolition in the District of Columbia, for the annihilation of the nefarious traffic in human beings between the States, and that this fellest of giant abominations may never be allowed, through iniquity framed by law, to pollute and blast territory already free.

Signed by direction of the meeting,

THOMAS MCCLINTOCK, } *Clerks.*  
RHODA DE GARMO, }

A memorial to our State Legislature was also adopted as follows:

To the Senate and House of Assembly of the State of New York. The memorial, &c., (as the last.)

Having assembled to enjoy the pleasure and profit of religious communion, and believing that generous affections and kind deeds are the most acceptable worship of our Heavenly Father, our thoughts have been directed to the many evil laws and institutions which wro g and degrade our fellow men. Regarding Capital Punishment as a practice at once barbarous and cruel, we ask the Legislature to investigate the subject. We propound the interrogation to you, whether advancement in the recognition of the inviolability of human life, does not *demand* the abrogation of this crimson code—which harmonizes so fully with the barbar-



isms of past ages—and the substituting therefor, such regulations as shall more effectually check the spirit of violence in the land, and seek to reform the deluded ones, who unhappily have lived in violation of those laws designed to make man the friend of man throughout the world?

Signed, &c.

A general Address relative to great practical duties which devolve on all, as intelligent and accountable members of the social community, was read and united with. Thos. M'Clintock, Oliver Johnson, Azaliah Schooley, Mary Ann M'Clintock, Miles S. Griswold, Joseph A. Dugdale, Susan Doty, Margaret Pryor, Richard P. Hunt, and Rhoda De Garmo were appointed a committee to give to it such revision as may be proper preparatory to publication. A Letter of sympathy and encouragement to those engaged in humanitarian reforms, was also read and adopted. The committee above named were directed to have both Addresses printed, with such other proceedings of this meeting as they may deem expedient, in suitable form for circulation.

A voluntary contribution was taken up, and Azaliah Schooley was appointed Treasurer to the meeting.

The following Letter to the Governor of Tennessee, on behalf of Richard Dillingham, who is incarcerated in the prison of that State, for conscientiously endeavoring to liberate some slaves, was presented and adopted. The Clerks were directed to have it forwarded.

*To Neil S. Brown, Governor of the State of Tennessee.*

Friends from Ohio, in attendance upon our Yearly Meeting, have informed us of the conviction and sentence of Richard Dillingham, for aiding the escape of slaves from your State. The youth of the prisoner, his unblemished reputation, his gentle, yet ardent and generous nature, and his sad fate, excite our deepest sympathy. Impelled by the spirit of our religion to do something in his behalf, and hoping that our appeal may not be in vain, we ask thee to exercise thy official power and restore him to liberty. And may the Peace and Joy with which our Heavenly Father rewards acts of kindness and forgiveness be thine forever.

Signed by direction of the Yearly Meeting of the religious Society of Congregational Friends, &c.

Epistles were read and approved to Ohio and Michigan Yearly Meetings of Friends, as follows:

*To the Yearly Meeting of Friends to be held at Salem, Ohio.*

**BELoved FRIENDS:**—It is in no small degree, a source of profound thankfulness, that we are enabled to address you in an associated capacity, freed from the sectarian fetters that have hitherto deprived us of communing, and expressing the sympathy and co-operation with some of you, that many of us have felt. But joy and rejoicing are ours, that the day so ardently desired by many of us, has at length dawned, when we can mingle together in that sweet unity of spirit that can only be felt where love unfeigned abounds in the heart, and casts out all fear. Oh, dear friends, though long and painful has been the night in which we have struggled for religious freedom, and our pathway oft so obscured by discouragement that we walked by faith and not by sight, yet the morning is beautiful and cheering, and before us we see in prospective brightness the promise of a blessed day, in which to labor for the promotion of all that is great, and good, and holy—the elevation and restoration of man to his long lost rights.

The wail of suffering millions is wafted on every breeze, and the imploring hand for help is reached out toward us from every point to which we turn, demanding with a brother's claim and a sister's right, that we falter not, nor spend our time idly in discussing mystic theories, or observing lifeless forms, while so much is to be done to plead their cause and rescue the perishing. And we trust from the favorable and comforting evidence we have had in this meeting, where soul has met soul in the bonds of fellowship and peace, we may be enabled to go on in the strength of the Lord, conquering and to conquer by the power of love, which is the only mighty instrumentality for pulling down all the strong holds of iniquity and oppression.

On reading an excellent epistle addressed to this meeting from some of your members, our spirits leaped with joy at the evidence therein conveyed, that some of your souls had been warmed by the coals of living truth, and your eyes anointed to see the fallacy of an empty profession; a profession made void by exalting the letter above the spirit, and tenaciously observing the rituals of a generation long since gathered to their fathers, instead of putting in practice the more weighty and all-important matters of the law of our moral and religious being—justice, mercy, and love; which are implanted in our natures by the finger of God, to be nursed, and cultivated, and made useful to ourselves and to our fellow-

creatures. And when these are made pre-eminent in our minds, there is little fear but that our outward form will be beautiful and comely, and adapted to our every want and necessity. The exercise of these Heaven born gifts to man, is the true and only means of exalting and perfecting his nature, and raising him to the God-like position that an All-wise Creator has destined him to occupy; and if faithful therein will crown him at every step with glory and joy unutterable. With these principles forever uppermost in our hearts, "Institutions," as says an excellent writer, "will be adapted to man, and not man sacrificed to Institutions." Have we not then abundant reason to thank God and take courage, seeing that our cause is approved by the Most High, and with songs of praise and our strength renewed, pledge ourselves anew to the glorious work.

We know not in what language to convey the grateful emotions of our hearts, for the many testimonials of sympathy and feeling that have been conveyed to us by the pure in heart from various parts of the land. And there are those with us at the present session, from far distant homes, whose tender sympathies vibrate with every chord; whose company at this momentous time, is like the oil and the wine to the bruised and stricken. The multiplying of words is but a faint exponent of what our hearts feel; the electric stream of gospel love warms our breasts and gently diffuses its cheering influence through our whole souls, as it does yours; and though distance separates the body, the spirits of the pure and good mingle together.

Under these precious feelings, with Love for our armor and kindness for our only weapon, we have nothing to fear. The opposition of enemies will be like cobweb, and the mighty stand abashed. Let us then approach those who have exercised tyranny over us, with nothing but child-like simplicity and brotherly kindness, so shall we overcome evil with good, not only in them but in ourselves. For it is impossible to exercise a single faculty of our natures, either for good or evil, but that it has a two-fold effect, on ourselves and on our brother. How very important therefore, that in every act we do the good and refuse the evil. Then will our light shine before men, and others seeing our good works, will be encouraged to come and do likewise. Finally, dear friends, farewell; be of good cheer and fear not, for we have renewed evidence that God is present to help in every needful time.

We remain your affectionate brethren and sisters, in every important work for the good of man.

Signed, &c.

*To the next Yearly Meeting of Friends to be held in Michigan.*

DEAR FRIENDS:—Having been incidentally informed that you have organized yourselves into a Yearly Meeting, the first term of which was held in 21 month last, and adopted a Discipline, ostensibly to aid you in your prospective advancement in exalting the standard of righteousness in the earth; we feel engaged, in fraternal love, to address you, while we too are assembled in the capacity of a Yearly Meeting, in order that we may put forth our collective energies for the amelioration of the condition of all those who are in need of physical, intellectual, or moral aid. We would extend the Good-Samaritan principle greatly beyond the limits of our own organization. We would recognize as objects of our special regard, the down-trodden slave; the inebriate who is pursuing a suicidal process; the criminal who is doomed to be sacrificed upon the relentless scaffold; and those who are groaning under the heavy yoke of oppression imposed on them by priestcraft and sectarianism. In short, we are desirous that whatever may go out from this meeting, may be as a messenger of good tidings to all who have need of light, or the helping hand of brotherly kindness.

We believe that to spend all our benevolent efforts on the adherents to our own organization, would be acting in too narrow a field for the expansive mind of Christian philanthropy. And while we are engaged in all the duties we owe to each other, and to the family of man at large; while we are removing the chains from those in bonds, lifting the head of him who is sunk in moral pollution, visiting the widow and fatherless in their afflictions—administering to the physical and moral necessities of all these—we deem that we are performing worship, at least not less acceptable than when we meet at set times, professing to be spiritual worshippers in silence. True worship is not confined to Samaria, Jerusalem, nor any set time or place designated by men, whether in the capacity of a Synod or Yearly Meeting; but the true worshippers worship in spirit and in truth. The spirit and truth of their profession will be felt whenever a good act is done—when ever obedience is rendered to the Divine law.

Relative to meetings for business, reception of members, treating with offenders, and acknowledging ministers, we would say,

that *all* our meetings should be business meetings, and if this be of the right kind, they will be meetings for the performance of worship; that all may be members who are candidly engaged in promoting goodness; that in treating with offenders we would use moral suasion only, and that we acknowledge no one as having *necessarily* nearer access to the Divine Mind than another.

We have had the company of a number of friends from a distance, whose co-operation with us in the work of reform has been truly grateful. We have received several animating addresses from collective bodies and individuals, who are acting in unison with us in the great field of progressive religious enterprise. Our meeting has been more numerously attended than some of us had anticipated, and our deliberations have been interesting beyond any thing we have experienced in a Yearly Meeting for many years.

In tendering to you the salutation of love, we feel that we with you are constituent parts of the great family of man, and that this family are becoming, and are still more to become, co-workers for the mutual good of all its branches.

Signed, &c.

An epistle to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and one of sympathy and counsel to Friends of Marlborough and Nine Partners, were also approved by the Meeting.

The following minute of advice was adopted and directed to be published with the proceedings of the meeting, viz :

We earnestly and affectionately recommend all our Friends who desire the advancement of the great principles of practical righteousness, to look toward being associated in their little meetings upon a simple Religious Basis, avoiding extraneous, uncalled for Church arrangements. Wherever practicable, let Monthly Meetings be instituted and records kept. Especially we desire, that arrangements may be made for the accomplishment of marriages without resorting to the priest or minister of law.

Friends in different localities, are recommended to call, in their neighborhoods or wherever openings may present, during the recess of this meeting, General Meetings for the promotion of Truth and Goodness and a free interchange of Sentiments, and to notify our Committee of Correspondence of such appointments.

The following were appointed said Committee of Correspondence, viz : Elias Doty, Ezak Wilbur, Susan Doty, Farmington ;

Nicholas Hallock, Milton, Ulster Co. ; Edward Hull, Hart's Village, Dutchess Co. ; John Allen, Lavana, Cayuga Co. ; Charles A. Howland, Scipioville, ditto ; Mary Estis, Stephen Estis, Fairport, Chemung Co. ; Oliver Mitchell. Alfred Mitchell, De Ruyter, Madison Co. ; Griffith M. Cooper, Williamson, Wayne Co. ; William G. Barker, West Walworth, ditto ; Myron W. Jenkins, Marengo, ditto ; Rhoda De Garmo, Isaac Post, Rochester ; Webster Laing, Reuben P. Mosher, Waterloo.

Having, with much unanimity and brotherly love, sweetly labored together to promote the cause of truth and humanity, the meeting adjourned, to meet again in this house, the Second-day (Monday,) after the first First-day in the Sixth month next, at 11 o'clock in the morning—meetings for social worship the day preceding.\*

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\*That will be, First-day or Sunday, the 2d of Sixth Month, (June,) 1850

# AN EARNEST AND AFFECTIONATE ADDRESS

TO ALL PEOPLE, AND ESPECIALLY RELIGIOUS PROFESSORS

OF EVERY NAME—FROM THE

YEARLY MEETING OF CONGREGATIONAL FRIENDS,

Held at Waterloo, New-York, by adjournments, from the 4th  
to the 6th, inclusive, of the sixth month, 1849.

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*To all to whom these may come, greeting. Righteousness and  
Peace be multiplied.*

Convened on a Basis of Religious Association intended to recognize perfectly the rights and responsibilities of man—not to build up a sect or party, new or old, but to promote Truth and Goodness universally among men—the condition of the human family throughout the world, and especially in Christendom, of which we form a proximate part, has engaged our serious deliberations. Regarding this subject of deep and pervading interest we ask your earnest attention to some facts and views which we deem of unspeakable importance.

And first, as to man's nature, relations, and duties. The inquiry here is primary and fundamental: for in a universe arranged by Infinite Wisdom, Goodness, and Power, man's relations must needs harmonize with the properties of his nature, and his duties bear an exact correspondence to his relations.

A slight view of man's constitution—his capabilities, wants, sympathies, affections—shows indisputably that he is fitted for vast and sublime communion with nature and with nature's Divine Architect. Communion with the beautiful, the good, the true. Communion which belongs to his senses and his soul, and with which his happiness is in dissolubly connected. Every department of nature, visible and invisible, has for him its pleasures and its pains, as the unperturbed or perturbed principles of his own nature do their work. Every relation has its importance and duties.

But the relations he sustains to his fellow man and to God the Author of his being, transcend immeasurably all others.

To his brethren and sisters of the human family he finds himself attracted and bound by sympathies, by intellectual, social and moral perceptions, which demonstrate to him that his happiness is identified with theirs; that it is a boon of reciprocal benefits, which can only be secured by fidelity in imparting; in other words, by the practice of all the relative and social duties. If he violate any of these, the worm of misery is generated in his bosom, which never dies but with returning fidelity.

To his God he feels the relation he sustains—sublime, glorious. A sense of dependence—his need of the Infinite of wisdom, goodness, power, gush up spontaneously from the depths of the soul, when great exigencies, difficulties, fear, surprise him, and turn his imploring spirit to God. A consciousness that for his being, and all its capabilities of enjoyment, he is wholly and momentarily dependent on God, calls for gratitude, love, obedience. This worship if he yield not, in conformity to the Divinely established laws of his mind, clouds of darkness veil from him the brightest beam that ever shone on man, the beam that lights the child to the smiles of the Divine Parent, and enables him in confidence to say, "Father!" And the wants of his nature unsupplied, his highest life languishes, and the worm of disquiet gnaws in the dark.

Here presents THE GREAT TRUTH—a truth which no doubt has been perceived and felt by men of simple and unsophisticated minds in every age, because based on the normal action of the inherent principles of the human soul—that the substance and being of all true religion and morals are comprehended in LOVE TO GOD AND LOVE TO MAN. And this truth is as beautiful to contemplate as it is great in its character and results. The wise Author of being, has made the exercise of this sweet and holy affection indispensable to that communion with nature and nature's God, and that harmonious development and growth of man's powers, from which his happiness and the perfection of his being are to be derived. Morals and religion—the one comprehending our duties to man, the other to God—are, in the beneficent economy of Infinite Wisdom, inseparably connected; so that the one can only be practically exhibited in its Divine and beautiful proportions, as fidelity is maintained in regard to the other. Thus universally true is the declaration of an apostle, that he who affirms he loves God while he hates his brother, utters that which can have



no foundation in truth.\* The only certain evidence we can give that we love God, is by practically demonstrating that we love our brother. And it is equally a philosophical truth, that as man loves God; as his mind is brought into sympathy and accord with the perfections of the Divine Nature, and he thus becomes regulated and harmonized within himself, he invariably experiences a strong and growing desire, that the harmony and unity which reign in his own soul should be permanently established in the human family, and govern all their social relations. And moreover, that all the good he participates, whether it relate to his physical or his spiritual nature, should be diffused, and become the property of universal man.

In the light of these indubitable facts, we ask you to look over the active world of human affairs. What do we find? A subversion, wide and terrible, of all the social affections and duties; a scene of antagonisms most dire and calamitous; injustice, cruelty, oppression, treachery, malignity—in a word, *hatred* instead of *love*.

We wish not to draw the picture darker than fact demands. We joyfully recognize amid the deformities which sicken the soul of humanity, beautiful tints drawn with the rainbow colors of Heaven, and radiant with Light, and Truth, and Love. And we behold the picture brightening with the lapse of ages. But looking upon existing facts, the vices, the crimes, the mighty evils which afflict communities and nations, infesting church and state, and triumphing over both—in view of these facts do we not find work for every hand and every heart, in whom any measure of love of humanity finds a dwelling place?

To some of these evils we would now call your attention. And

1. *The inequalities which exist in regard to a supply of the wants of our common nature.* This supply, physically and mentally, is indispensable to the happiness of every human being. The body, the beautiful temple of man's higher nature, has its demands, and in God's world of physical being the supply exists, without deficiency. But while some have a superabundance, to hoard up or "consume upon their lusts," the many, toiling early and late, have meagre fare, scarcely what are called the necessities, few or none of the luxuries or comforts of life.

If the body fares badly the mind fares worse. The incessant drudgery to procure the body's wants, leaves no time to supply the wants of the spirit, to cultivate and develope its social, intel

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\* 1 John iv. 20.

lectual, moral, religious powers. The superior nature thus yields to the stern mandate of the inferior, and the soul is dwarfed.

Unspeakable evils grow out of this state of things. Here exist, in the same community, the two extremes of want and repletion, of excessive toil and enervating idleness; both violations of natural law, and the Divine law cannot be violated with impunity. The rich and idle, whatever share of attention they may give to the intellectual, find it convenient to silence the demands of the moral nature, so far as they may, by giving little cultivation in that direction; and dissipation and vice are the natural results. The indigent laboring classes, unsupplied with the means of mental culture, both for themselves and their children, lack some of the strongest ties which bind families together in harmony and affection. Many, in consequence, become the easy prey of the dissipated and licentious; and their ruin is facilitated by insidious promises of a life of ease and affluence. Here the serpent of sin enters the fairest Eden our provident Father has planted on earth—the domestic circle, the family relation; of all human relations the most intimate, the most dear and sacred. And here, in the existing inequalities and mental wilderness of human society, are the primal springs of that wild and terrific flood of licentiousness which sweeps through the land, bearing with it a fearful amount of peace and happiness.

To this unequal and false condition of society is attributable also, a large amount of the intemperance which prevails. An evil destructive at once of the bodily and mental powers, of all the sweet affections and sympathies which bind together human beings in the enlivening relations of life. The opulent classes neglecting labor—man's normal condition, and, in its due proportion, among our greatest blessings, essential to health and vigor of body and mind—seek artificial means to procure that enjoyment which comes only by the natural and legitimate use of their powers, and thus resort to stimulating beverages and condiments—leaving the pure and delightful streams which the Creator has bountifully spread around them for the supply of their wants. The overtasked laborer resorts to similar stimulating poisons, under the false idea of recruiting his exhausted strength, or allaying the feelings of discouragement and anxiety resulting from the crushed aspirations of his nature.

Ought not the axe to be laid to the root of the tree producing these baneful fruits? Should not the mountains be levelled and

the dark forests hewed down, that the springs may be dried up whence issue these bitter waters? And can we remain in apathy and indifference to such a state of things, if the love of man live in our bosoms? Verily, nay.

2. *War*. Among the evils resulting from the misdirection and perversion of the principles of man's nature, the practice of War holds a horrible pre-eminence. How melancholy the reflection, that beings gifted, as we have seen, by the Author of their existence with abilities for high, and holy, and felicitous communion one with another and with the Infinite Divine Mind, have been, through the various ages, and still are, directing these powers to the terrible panoply of War; engaged in conflicts with each other in which all the malignant passions find their appropriate exercise, and the pure feelings of our nature—benevolence, mercy, love, humanity—perish! Brother bathing the cold steel in the life-blood of brother, or by instruments of destruction tearing and mutilating the most beautiful of earth's temples—the house of the soul immortal!—Could the laws of the physical universe be staid, well might the sun veil his face, and all nature be shrouded in gloom, at a spectacle so horrid. And yet what do we behold? Those who name the name of Christ, and profess to worship the same God, in positive contradiction to the precepts and the practice of Jesus, engaged in these bloody conflicts, not only with the children of the same Universal Parent, of other names, but, even more frequently, one with another! And those who profess to serve him as ministers of his gospel of peace, are found urging on embattled hosts to the work of death—profaning the name of God by using it as an incentive to the respective assailants, and chanting *Te Deums* for victory achieved; for enabling them to strew the battle field with the mangled bodies of the dying and the dead!

3. *Slavery*. A moment's reflection must convince the sincere and dispassionate inquirer, that slavery,—in reducing man to a chattel, a beast of burden, an article of merchandize, an instrument in the hand of an owner,—annihilates marriage; crushes the natural affections implanted in the mind by its Divine Author; utterly disregards the duties of husband, parent, child, brother; in short, violates every right of man, and every moral law of God. It does the first, by prohibiting the use of man's physical and mental powers to promote his own happiness, and the happiness of those connected with him in the various relations of life;—the second, by making it impossible for the SLAVE to perform the duties which

God requires, and to enjoy the happiness intended for man in the fulfilment of those duties,—and consequently, on the part of the SLAVE HOLDER is a flagrant violation of Justice, Mercy, Goodness, Love, and every moral principle; while, by stepping between man and the Divine requirements, it is a practical and blasphemous denial of God's right to Govern his creatures, and is *essential* and *most palpable* ATHEISM. In addition to this, it debases what is most noble; defaces what is most beautiful; sunders the dearest connections; crushes intellects, breaks hearts, and degrades bodies. It brings into action the worst feelings and passions; destroys religion, spreads moral pollution in the community; paralyzes industry, and even blasts the SOIL. It is enough to say, that this mighty wrong, this giant sin, numbers its three million victims in our own country.

Could an evil of such magnitude be continued in our midst, were there vitality in the religion—in the churches of the country?—were not the ministry emanating from the ten thousand pulpits in the land, infidel to truth, to love, to humanity; and their occupants, consciously or unconsciously, caterers to the Infidelity, the Atheism which marks the system, and the complicated iniquities which are its attendants? Verily, nay.

4. Allied to this iniquity is the *Prejudice against Color*, so shamefully prevalent among us. Man is identical in the elements of his being wherever found on God's earth; his feelings, his sorrows, his joys the same; the aspirations of his soul embrace alike the interests of time and eternity. And shall he presumptuously conclude, that He who has diversified creation with every hue, intended that the variety of complexion in the human family should separate his children from each other, or form a barrier to their mingling in common brotherhood! Shall he, in the indulgence of this unholy prejudice, deny even the power of Religion to remove it, and carry out his practical ungodliness by transporting his brother to other climes? So proclaims the cruel and unjust scheme of colonization—and *the Religion of the Country* sustains it.

5. Bearing close analogy to the system of slavery, is *the condition to which woman* is reduced, by the practical *denial of her equality with man*, in rights, privileges, duties, and responsibilities. A similar disregard of the fact of the identity of human nature, and infidelity of self-evident truth, exists in this as in the case of chattel slavery. The identity of human nature, is the im-

pregnable basis of the equality of human rights. If human nature be the same, then interests, capabilities, responsibilities, rights, are the common inheritance of all, from the common Parent. And all these are facts of indubitable consciousness. Yet of these facts there is a practical denial in the arrangements of society, almost every where; and the authority of Religion is claimed, by its *professed ministers*, for this unspeakable wrong done to *one half the human family!*

Can religion be at variance with nature—with the facts of consciousness? Then God's laws are in conflict with themselves—religion is an arbitrary thing, and man an enigma! *Love to God* and *love to man*, are terms of no significance. They may mean *hatred, injustice, cruelty, oppression*, or any thing that assuming or legalized teachers may interpret. In vain are all appeals to principles of benevolence implanted in our nature, or to our perception of any Divine or moral attribute. Alas for the theology of the schools—of professional ministers of religion! Here is the soil from which the mighty Tree of evil, whose branches overshadow the land, derives much of its sustenance.

We have seen the fruitlessness of the Religion of the churches, respecting great evils which exist in our midst. It is not wanting in regard for the “mint, anise, and cummin”—in zeal for ceremonial usages and theological dogmas, as Water Baptism, the Supper, Trinity, Total Depravity, Vicarious Atonement, an Imputed Righteousness, &c.; which may all be as punctiliously observed, as readily embraced and firmly entertained by the immoral, as by the pious and good—and the latter even more readily. But regarding these flagrant evils, it is blind, and deaf, and dumb! In the practical exemplification of *love of God and humanity*, the Church of Christ, so called, has probably no pre-eminence over the Church of the World; probably falls behind it. In doctrine it is not less defective than in practice. To this point we now ask your serious attention.

We speak in general terms of the theology of the churches of Christendom when we say, it starts with the non-recognition and even denial of the most momentous and glorious Truth that ever dawned on conscious man, the fact that God dwells immediately in the human soul—which, of all earth's buildings, he has reared as his highest temple—writing there, in characters forever fresh and new, his Perfect Law of Righteousness and Truth, which each may read and study for himself. That, being perfect and un-

changeable, and man the same in nature and wants, God sustains the same relation to man he has ever sustained; is as present to the human mind to-day, in all the fulness of his Divinity, as he was in any age of the world; as ready to inspire the faithful and obedient soul now with truth, wisdom, goodness, as he was the men of any generation; as he was to inspire a Moses, an Isaiah, a Socrates, a Jesus, a Paul, or the wise and good of any nation or people.

The denial of this sublime fact—not a speculation of the fancy, but a fact of consciousness, resting on the affirmations of universal human nature—is the greatest ideal error that ever entered the mind of man, and in its practical tendencies most prejudicial to piety and goodness. If God has made the soul of man for intelligent communion with himself, the recognition of the fact is essential to the right use of all his powers. The nearer and more intimate the sense of the Divine presence, the recognition of the operations of Divinity, the more perfect this communion.—The yearnings of our unperverted nature demand it. They require, not a God afar off, but a God near at hand, to whom the soul may turn for wisdom, for strength, for counsel, for consolation in the trials and exigencies of life, and receive them immediately from the Infinite Fountain.—The maintenance of man's spiritual life—of his filial love, requires it. The pure flame of piety must be kindled by Heaven's own fire, and sustained by materials from the treasury of Divinity. And in God's world of perfections, in which there is neither redundancy nor deficiency, these wants of our nature, are so many living testimonies that the supply is at hand; that the Father has not forsaken the child.

But the theology of the churches calls man, for the knowledge of God and his will—for wisdom, counsel, strength,—not to the demonstrations of his presence, the operations of his Divinity in their conscious natures, but to some word, or record out of themselves, the production of man; telling them, God inspires not men now as he was wont to do in other days; that it is not our privilege to receive Truth immediately from the Infinite Source; that we must receive it at second-hand from the records of men of former ages. Thus mankind are turned away from God, the Central Light of the moral universe, and the spirit is involved in darkness. The deepest springs of the human soul, which would instinctively flow back to the Fountain whence they came, are turned from

their natural course, and drought to man's spiritual nature supervenes.

The religious element however, being consituent of his nature, still acts. And turned thus from God to that which is creaturely, as a natural consequence he lapses into idolatry. A book, or the prescriptions of men, or some of the objects of the visible creation, or whatever to the mind, in its misdirected state, is the highest standard of truth, becomes the object of adoration, and takes the place of the Holy One. And hence, in Christendom exists, wide and deep, and has existed for ages, the fact of BIBLE WORSHIP. The imperfect work of men, more or less inspired, living in comparatively rude periods, and undeveloped epochs of the human mind, is made to take the place of that Holy Scripture, written by Omnipresent God on the living principles of man's nature, and under circumstances which, agreeably to the law of progress, should admit of higher light.

Man never departs from Divine law without bringing upon himself disastrous consequences. Leaving the Fountain of living waters, he hews out to himself broken cisterns. Leaving the Great Central Light of moral and religious truth, he wanders in darkness. Taking for his standard of morals and religion, not the unchangeable and universal principles of the Divine nature, but something bounded by human limitations, his standard is limited, partial. He has not the basis of unity God has laid. The consequence is, he becomes a sectarian, a partisan, a religious bigot. He becomes exclusive and intolerant. The very principles of his nature are perverted; the benevolent sympathies and affections, are turned into gall by Religious Fanaticism, and he becomes a persecutor of his brother, whose conclusions agree not with his own. Thus has the world been deluged with blood. And is it not true that in Christendom, the Bible, (not its moral truths,) has been erected into an idol, before which more worshippers have been bowing down than ever did homage to any idol of wood or stone, and to which probably more human sacrifices have been offered, than to any Moloch or Juggernaut ever erected in Heathen lands?

But, hoping the age of these terrible scenes has passed, let us look at the present effect of this fundamental error. The gospel of peace and love, in its progressive unfoldings to the human mind, is bringing into view the moral deformities, the vices—many of them hoary with age—which exist among mankind; to some of which we have definitely adverted. In the records of the im-

perfect past, precept and practice, apparent or real, in justification of these evils, can naturally be found, and are resorted to, by those attaching to them an idolatrous veneration, to arrest the progress of reform. Hence the Bible is appealed to, to sustain the sins of slavery, and war, and the deprivation of woman of her rights, and even the use of intoxicating drinks;—and might with equal justice be appealed to, to sustain Polygamy, Concubinage, and Persecution on account of religion.\* And in proportion as it is made The Standard, the work of reform must be impeded. For not being a unitary whole, there must ever be a conflict between the beautiful and luminous truths it contains—truths which will be venerated while morals and religion exist—and the errors of positive statute and practice associated with them—errors in everlasting hostility to sound morals and true religion.

Brethren and sisters! we beseech you, calmly and seriously reflect. God is the Primal Cause, the Fountain of Truth; the Bible, and all other human records, whatever their excellence, but *the secondary effect*. To give any of these the precedence over his law *written immediately in your own minds*, is to be infidel to God, and regardless of his love and goodness, who has fitted your natures for communion with his own all-pervading spirit. And, in proportion as you are infidel to God in this great fundamental point, will you be infidel to humanity. The love of man will decline—however you may deceive yourselves, by substituting for it a zeal for abstract opinions and for forms and ceremonies, which may be strictly observed without giving being to one tender emotion for your suffering and degraded fellow-beings, and without prompting to one active effort for their relief, and elevation to the glory and dignity of their nature.

Let us then appreciate our privileges, and maintain a lively sense of our responsibilities. Let us ask of God, truth, goodness, love, and be faithful in their application to practice in all our relations. So shall we be furnished by our Heavenly Father with strength for the work of our day, and each be qualified to do his portion of labor toward hastening the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

Signed by direction of the Meeting,

THOMAS MCCLINTOCK,	} Clerks.
RHODA DE GARMO,	

\* On the latter point, see Deut. xvii. 2-5, and especially Chap. xiii. throughout.



## ADDRESS TO REFORMERS.

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*To all Earnest and Devoted Laborers in the various Humanitary Reforms, so conspicuous in the present age, the Yearly Meeting of Congregational Friends, sendeth Greeting.*

BELoved FRIENDS: Assembled, in obedience to the call of duty, for the promotion of pure and undefiled religion throughout the world, our souls have been stirred by an earnest desire to strengthen the hands and encourage the hearts of those who, in the midst of obloquy and reproach, are struggling, through the various Reformatory Associations of the present day, to abolish the giant evils which have so long cursed and degraded the human family. Having broken the ties of party and sect, under a solemn conviction that they are incompatible with the freedom of the soul and a mighty obstacle to the progress of the human race in knowledge and goodness, we have been drawn together for our spiritual strength and elevation, and by a common sympathy in every work of practical righteousness, and a common desire to find a basis of Union for all the friends of God and Humanity—a common platform, on which they may meet in perfect harmony with the laws of their being and the equal relations which our Father in Heaven has established between them. Such a basis of universal fellowship we have sought, not in creeds and forms, but in love to God, and in those principles of FUNDAMENTAL MORALITY which are the elements of all true religion, and which are so clearly set forth in the precepts and so beautifully illustrated in the life of Christ. While your Associations are devoted each specifically to one or another of the various branches of reform, ours is designed to embrace them all in one common Brotherhood, and to open a channel through which those engaged in one department may help those who are toiling in another, and receive and impart the strength which is to be derived from communion with God and

with kindred spirits. Standing upon this platform, we rejoice to greet you as fellow-laborers with us in the great work of Human Redemption and Salvation, and to tender you our hearty God-speed in the work to which you have been called.

In the field of moral no less than that of physical effort, there is an absolute necessity for a division of labor—a necessity arising on the one hand from the magnitude and variety of the work to be accomplished, and on the other from the great diversity of gifts in the different classes of the human family. The attention of one class may be particularly called to the evils of Intemperance; another may be inspired to do battle with the gigantic sin of Slavery; a third to denounce and expose the atrocities and crimes of War, and another to labor for the Abolition of the gallows and the adjustment of the whole penal code to the Christian law of Forgiveness; another may be called of God to arrest the tide of Sexual Impurity; the province of others may be to seek a remedy for the blighting evils of Poverty, to protest against the tyranny of Wealth, the monopoly of Land, or to harmonize the relations of men in Industrial Associations; another class may be impelled to labor for the restoration to Woman of the inalienable Rights of which she has been so long despoiled; others may seek the overthrow of a despotic and mercenary Priesthood, to call mankind away from reliance upon empty forms and the observance of holy days, and to consecrate all time to the service of God; and still another class may devote their energies to Physiological reform, or to the sacred work of Education. But, as all moral evils spring from the same root, so is the work of abolishing them essentially **ONE WORK**. Hence we exhort the friends of Reform, in whatever portion of the moral vineyard they are called to labor, to remember that they are one Brotherhood, and should therefore be of one heart and one mind. We are deeply impressed with the conviction, that not only is an earnest devotion to one philanthropic enterprise consistent with a hearty interest in every work of reform, but that our usefulness and efficiency in our several spheres will be proportioned to our just appreciation of the labors of others and to our diligence in cultivating the spirit of Universal Unity. The narrow bigotry which leads us to form an exaggerated estimate of our own immediate labors and to undervalue the toils and sacrifices of others not less devoted than ourselves to the welfare of mankind, is at war with the whole genius of Reform and

a mighty hindrance to our moral and spiritual progress. The Friends of Humanity of every class should sedulously cultivate the spirit of harmony and mutual co-operation, so beautifully described by one of the prophets of Israel: "They helped every one his neighbor; and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage. So the carpenter encouraged the gold-smith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil, saying, It is ready for the soldering: and HE FASTENED IT WITH NAILS THAT IT SHOULD NOT BE MOVED."—Isaiah. xli. 6-7.

We admonish you, beloved fellow-laborers, to be steadfast and immovable in your adherence to fundamental principles, to Right and Truth in opposition to the maxims of a worldly Expediency. Be true, under all circumstances, to your highest convictions, to the voice of Duty in your own souls. Let no temporary good, no impatience for immediate results, tempt you to swerve from the line of strictest Rectitude. Remember that duty is yours, while consequences are God's. Enter into no compromise with the evils which you seek to exterminate. While you deal kindly and patiently with those who set themselves in opposition to the cause of Reform, seeking to win them to the right way in the spirit of love, we exhort you also to be bold and fearless in proclaiming the Truths you are set to defend. Let your rebukes of sin be tempered with kindness, but give no place to that false charity which shrinks from the utterance of an important truth from the fear of giving offence.

We entreat you also to be faithful to the Truth in dealing with the corrupt parties and sects which lend their influence to sustain injustice, oppression and crime. The Church which sanctions or apologizes for Slavery and War, or which neglects or refuses to take the side of the oppressed and down-trodden, is controlled by the spirit of practical Infidelity and Atheism. The ministry which is zealous for creeds and forms, but utters no efficient testimony against the popular sins of the age, is not a Christian but an Infidel ministry, and we counsel you, by your reverence for God and your love for man to lend it no countenance or support. Be not deceived by the potent wiles, nor awed into submission by the anathemas of such a Church and such a Ministry. Though the hosts of sect and party are encamped on every side, be not dismayed nor disheartened, for in the conflict with unrighteousness "one shall chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight." The advocates and apologists of Sin may seek to over-

whelm you with the waves of popular indignation ; you may be denounced as heretics, fanatics and infidels ; but remember for your consolation, that such has been the fate of Reformers in all past ages, and that even **JESUS OF NAZARETH**, in whom was no guile, was charged with blasphemy and doomed to suffer an ignominious death upon the cross.

In thus addressing you, we obey the holiest impulses of our nature, which are ever prompting us to deeds of charity and benevolence, and to manifestations of sympathy for all who are sincerely concerned for the welfare of man. The religious association in which we are united assumes no ecclesiastical authority, neither does it, as such, set up any claims to your veneration as a Divinely constituted body. Your reverence is due to the manifestations of the Divine Will in your own hearts, not to organizations which, however holy in their origin and purposes, are but the instrumentalities adapted to the present condition and wants of mankind.

A deep sympathy for you under the manifold trials and discouragements which throng your pathway, an ardent desire that you may prove faithful even unto death, constrains us, as your equal brethren, to offer you these words of admonition and cheer. Receive them, we pray you, in the spirit of Love, and so far as they shall be found to accord with your own highest convictions, let them be duly impressed upon your minds and hearts.

Finally, dear friends, be vigilant in the work to which you are called ; and may the God of Truth inspire you with love, endow you with wisdom and strength, and crown your labors with glorious success.

Signed by direction of the Yearly Meeting of Congregational Friends, held in Waterloo, Seneca County, N. Y., from the 4th to the 6th of sixth month, inclusive, 1849.

THOMAS M'CLINTOCK, }  
RHODA DE GARMO, } *Clerks.*

## APPENDIX.



## AN ADDRESS TO FRIENDS, OF GENESEE YEARLY MEETING, AND ELSEWHERE.

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*To Friends of Genesee Yearly Meeting, and elsewhere, to whom  
these may come :*

BELoved BRETHREN AND SISTERS :—We address you under very peculiar circumstances, and on a subject, we trust, dear and deeply cherished by you—the benefits resulting from religious association. That these benefits may be secured, it is obviously needful, that religious associations be conducted on principles harmonious with the mind's fidelity to the progressive unfoldings of Divine light ; as it is by this only we can be adequately assured of our duty, and qualified to fulfil the work of our day.

Such of you as have been accustomed to attend our Yearly Meetings, must be aware, that for a number of years past, we have failed to realize that unity, the existence of which was indispensable to enable us, as a body, to advance the great principles of righteousness embraced in some of the most needful reforms of this age, in which, from devotion to the discoveries of truth, brethren and sisters have felt themselves called upon to act : such as the mighty sins of War, Slavery, Intemperance, &c., which are afflicting the human family, crushing the Divine principles of man's nature, alienating man from his God and from his brother. Evidence has been lamentably furnished, of the existence and growth among us of a spirit of proscription and intolerance. A spirit which has been unwilling to concede to every equal brother and sister those rights which it claimed for itself—the rights of conscience, and action in conformity to apprehended immediate Divine requiring, while the conduct remained pure and blameless among men. As a natural attendant, there has also been manifested an increasing assumption of claim for the authority of the letter both of scripture and discipline, virtually and practically exalting it over the spirit. Much has accordingly been wont to

be said by the class of Friends referred to, expressive of a regard for order and discipline, while none have shown a disposition so ready to depart from both, when they have stood in the way of party purposes.

You are doubtless aware, that some difficulty has, for several years, existed in the Yearly Meeting relative to the Quarterly Meeting of Michigan, in consequence of the latter having discontinued the holding of a Meeting of Ministers and Elders. An act which they believed themselves bound to do in obedience to the "Sovereign Lord of Conscience," having in vain, in common with a large part of the Yearly Meeting, endeavored to obtain relief by a change of the discipline. At our Yearly Meeting last year, a report was received from a committee appointed the preceding year, to visit Friends of Michigan, take into consideration a proposition then pending from that meeting to exempt them from the obligation of holding a meeting of Ministers and Elders, and to recommend to the Yearly Meeting such measure as they should deem their circumstances required. Their report, which was signed by a majority of the committee, recommended, in substance, that unless Michigan Quarterly Meeting resumed the Meeting of Ministers and Elders the Yearly Meeting should decline to receive hereafter the reports of that Quarter. The proposition was discussed till a late hour in the afternoon, and so strong and preponderating was the expressed judgment of the meeting against it, that several friends who had favored its adoption, gave it as their decided conviction that it would be unsafe to adopt it, and proposed referring the subject another year. And the clerk stated, that there need be no fear entertained that he would make a minute adopting the Report, while there was a respectable minority opposed to it. But so urgent were a party in the meeting, who openly treated with contempt all claims of tender conscience and religious liberty in the premises, that the subject could not be resulted, and was postponed for further consideration next day.

In the morning of the following day, instead of resuming the subject in its natural and regular order, the party favoring the proposition contained in the Report, proposed and insisted that the meeting should finish other remaining business, previously to the further consideration of the subject regarding Michigan, which was legitimately before the Yearly Meeting. These matters having been disposed of in this unusual way, the discussion



of the proposition of the committee was renewed, and although many friends had returned home, the preponderating voice was manifestly still against its adoption. But the party in its favor were unyielding, and the clerk, contrary to the declaration voluntarily made by him the previous day, read a minute adopting it; thus forcing it over the heads, it is believed, of more than one half of the meeting. Being reminded of the pledge he had given, he admitted the fact, and said that since last session he and the assistant clerk had conferred together, and had concluded to take the responsibility of making the minute he had read, rather than keep the Yearly Meeting agitated another year. Appeals were made to their sense of justice and honor, and the principles of the society which were being violated. But in vain. The measure was taken, the purpose inflexible. Party predilection had an unalterable ascendancy over justice and truth. In this state of confusion, disorder, and dissatisfaction, the meeting ended.

At the Yearly Meeting the present year, 1848, Michigan friends, deeming the proceedings of last year in their case, arbitrary and illegal, and apprehending that they had not been officially informed of those proceedings, appointed representatives and brought to the Yearly Meeting their accounts as usual, accompanied with propositions, which they believed it right to make, for peace and unity, on such principles as they deemed in accordance with the Divine mind. Their documents were laid on the table with those of the other Quarters. The clerk, however, read only those of the other meetings. One of the representatives stated, that the reports of Michigan Quarterly Meeting were on the table. An individual, who had been a prominent actor in the measure adopted last year, quickly remarked, that the accounts from Michigan could not be received—that they had no right there. It was stated, substantially, that Michigan friends were a constituent part of the Yearly Meeting—did not consider they had been officially informed of the proceeding in their case, and therefore deemed their accounts rightfully in the meeting. Besides, that the proceeding of last year was to be regarded as null and void, having been carried in opposition to the judgment of a large, if not the larger part of the meeting, in violation of fundamental principle, and in a way subversive of the very basis of our union—the clerk having acted on a principle of despotism, in assuming the power to rule and govern his brethren in disregard of their rights and conscientious feelings. The discussion was continued

throughout the entire session, with no disposition on behalf of the clerk and party acting with him to yield. Finally it was concluded to adjourn till the next day.

On Third-day morning, the meeting having again convened, the representatives proposed the appointment of the former clerk. A number expressed their concurrence with the nomination. And soon as friends of an opposite sentiment had commenced the expression of their disunity, the representative who had named the Clerk was urged to nominate the Assistant, accompanied with the assertion that those who objected were all disorderly, and ought to have no attention paid to them. The Assistant was accordingly named forthwith, thus manifesting a predetermination to treat with disregard the voice of that part of the Meeting who had been aggrieved by the Clerk's procedure. In furtherance of this determination, means were sedulously used, for a long time, to interrupt and prevent the expression of disunity with the appointment. At length the former Clerk stated, that he could not record himself as Clerk to the Meeting while any of those who had objected to his appointment were unwilling to submit. This submission, it was signified, could not conscientiously be accorded, in view of the measures which had been adopted by the Clerk, involving a violation of a fundamental, recognized principle of Friends, and an invasion of the sacred rights of conscience, rights of inestimable value, not only to the Society, but to the world at large.

The party acting with the Clerk were now placed in a dilemma. Various propositions of a conciliatory character had been made, in order to enable the meeting to act in concert, such as taking one from each class of views to act conjointly as clerk and assistant. But these met with no favor from the uncompromising spirit which characterized one portion of the meeting. The Clerk who had been nominated was urged by the party in his favor, to change his conclusion by proceeding with their business. After some time, he again rose and said, he would state the ground on which he had objected to record his name. He considered it equivalent to recording a separation of the Yearly Meeting, and he was unwilling to assume that responsibility. It was evident, he said, there were two parties in the Meeting, whose views were irreconcilable. He was willing to grant equal honesty to both. He had made a minute recording himself Clerk, and if that part of the Meeting who united with him, were prepared that he

should read it, with the understanding that he was recording a minute of separation, he would proceed. He was then vociferously urged to proceed "ON THAT PRINCIPLE." He then conferred briefly with the friend named for assistant clerk, and rose and stated to the meeting, that said friend was willing to proceed on the principle which had been mentioned, and he would now read the minute. He accordingly read a minute recording himself clerk.

Seeing the determination to carry their purposes, regardless of all rights and all consequences, the desire was then expressed, that friends who disapproved of the proceedings which had taken place, would now be entirely still, and let the party that had appointed their clerk proceed in their business in their own way. Further participation with them was accordingly declined.

In the Women's Yearly Meeting, a state of similar suffering had long been experienced from the prevalence of the same spirit of intolerance and exclusion. The measure recommended in the Report of the Committee respecting Friends of Michigan, last year, was forced on that meeting in a way similar to that in the men's meeting, many protesting against it even to the very time of its adoption, which produced great confusion and much painful feeling. On the opening of the Yearly Meeting this year, two representatives from Michigan were present, and laid the minutes from that Quarter on the table. But their reading was neglected, and a studied disinclination evinced to give any satisfaction on the subject, the inquiries of the representatives, and others interested, being treated with silent indifference. The next day the subject was again introduced, by a friend kindly requesting an explanation, why the accounts of Michigan were not received nor any satisfaction for the omission given? Several friends joining in the inquiry, and no attention being paid to them, a friend suggested that much time might be saved by the reading of last year's minute relative to the subject. This was urged by very many friends. For a length of time the clerk showed no disposition to comply, when at last *one of the party* remarked, "she saw no harm in reading that minute;" whereupon the assistant clerk immediately read the minute, which purported to make it the business of the Committee to have informed them of the measure of last year. Michigan friends then said, no such information had been received by their meeting. In order to the restoration of peace and love, it was suggested by a dear friend

from another Yearly Meeting, that a Committee be appointed to procure a small alteration in the discipline relative to Meetings of Ministers and Elders. This was united with by many friends, but was contumeliously rejected by the party having their subservient clerks.

What has been said may give a faint view of the spirit and principles which have actuated a party in our Yearly Meeting, in the progress and consummation of the extraordinary measures they have carried out. We make not the statement to hold them up to censure, but from a sense of duty, to advise the members of the body of the character of the principles to which they give their influence if they voluntarily co-operate therewith, and the solemn responsibility which will rest upon them. As regards the actors, we would gladly cover them with the broadest mantle of charity that the most liberal construction of their conduct will admit, and would breathe for them the prayer, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do."

After these events, closing with the second session of the Yearly Meeting, information was spread in Men's and Women's Meetings, previously to adjournment, that Friends who loved *true* order and could not unite with the arbitrary measures which had been adopted, would meet in that house at a specified hour in the afternoon of the next day. Accordingly a large body of men and women friends convened, and after a deeply interesting and feeling conference, in which, through Divine goodness, our spirits were much united, an adjournment was made to the next day, for further interchange of feelings and sentiments.

At this adjournment, a Committee was appointed to draft an address to Friends of this Yearly Meeting, and elsewhere, expressive of the circumstances in which we have been placed, as briefly detailed in the preceding narrative of facts, and to invite all interested, to convene in General Conference at a future period, to consider of and adopt such measures as shall open in Divine Wisdom, to restore to all who wish the blessings of religious society, by association based on pure principles—principles in harmony with man's nature, his inalienable rights, and the Divine government. Such principles, we are persuaded, exist in the beneficial provisions of our Creator God. And before us we think we see, a beautiful path opened for the illustration of these principles in practice. And however trying to any, may be the breaking up of old modes of association and former connections, let consolation be

found, in beholding with an eye of faith a pathway, illuminated by the light and cheered by the joy of progress in truth and goodness. And, be'oved brethren and sisters, let it be borne in mind and duly appreciated, that *the burden of the separation rests on those who have made it*, and assumed the responsibility *by word and act*.

In a feeling of sympathy and love, we therefore invite you, *with all of congenial minds*, to meet in conference, preparatory to the measures indicated, in our Yearly Meeting-house, at Farmington, on the first Sixth-day in the 10th month next, at the 11th hour in the morning.

With the salutation of love, we are your friends.

Signed on behalf of a Conference of Friends, held on the 14th, 15th, and 16th of the 6th month. 1848.

THOMAS MCCLINTOCK, }  
RHODA DE GARMO, } Clerks.



# BASIS OF RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATION,

ADOPTED BY THE CONFERENCE HELD AT FARMINGTON,  
IN THE STATE OF NEW YORK, ON THE  
**Sixth and Seventh of Tenth month, 1848.**

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*To all to whom these may come.*

BELoved BRETHREN AND SISTERS :—

HAVING, pursuant to adjournment in the 6th month last, again met, to consider what measure it will be right to adopt, that the blessings of Religious Society may be placed within the reach of all, our minds have been led into an examination of religious association in general. In looking at this subject, melancholy evidences present on every hand, that societies or church organizations, ostensibly for the promotion of religion, have been among the greatest impediments to its progress, and the most fruitful sources of tyranny and oppression. But, while we feel that these facts should lead to the utmost care in regard to the principles permitted to enter into their structure, we are abundantly assured that these results are their abuse, not their necessary attendants—the consequence of the admission into them of elements hostile to man's nature, his duties, and inalienable rights.

Religious association has manifestly its foundation in the religious and social elements of the human mind—principles powerful and constant in our nature, and most beneficent in their legitimate action. We are made pre-eminently social beings. From the exercise of the social principles of our nature, flow all the reciprocal benefits, all the countless offices of love and kindness, which strew with blessings the path of life. Not only in the physical, but especially in the higher departments of man's nature—the moral and religious—we behold the working of this beautiful and beneficent economy ; in the mingling of sympathies and affections ; in imparting to each other the treasures of the intellect, the conscience, the religious feelings ; in united aspirations to, and reverence and adoration of, the Supreme Being.

To attain these social religious benefits in the highest degree,

assemblies are needed; these require arrangement, time, manner, as well as object; in short, organization, or understood modes of action. We need only that these be wise and right—not conflicting with man's prerogatives, nor God's.

The object of religious association may be defined in brief to be, the promotion of righteousness—of practical goodness—love to God and man—on the part of every member composing the association, and in the world at large. So far as it is instrumental to this end, it is Christian, a blessing to the community in which it exists. So far as it is not thus instrumental, its non-existence were desirable. To promote this object there must be a practical conformity to the Divine laws—the principles of the association must be in harmony with the principles of the Divine government. For righteousness is none other than the result of these laws—the exemplification of these principles in the actions of moral agents.

Man is made to sustain a relation of an intelligent and accountable agent under the Supreme Intelligence; has the law of God written on the conscious powers of his soul; stands in such contiguity to Omnipresent God as to have immediately revealed to him God's will regarding him. **THIS IS THE FUNDAMENTAL FACT IN RELIGION**; that which constitutes man a subject of God's moral government; the foundation of his hopes, of his accountability. This revelation of God's will to him he feels and knows to be personal—his accountability personal and not transferable, though connecting him in obligation, and binding him by kindred ties with the whole family of man. Yet, as absolutely personal and individual as though he and God were alone in the Universe. Hence his conscience must be kept sacred in its devotion and allegiance to God, from whom the law comes. No laws nor institutions of men, should restrict this individual exercise of conscience, of responsibility. The only restriction that can be Christian or lawful in this momentous matter, in the terms of association, is the admission of the obvious principle, that no pretext of conscience can be valid which violates the equal rights of others, or any of the unchangeable principles of moral obligation, which are primary to conscience, and by which, in the Divine order, it is to be governed.

Liberty of conscience, then—the recognition of the right of every member to act in obedience to the evidence of Divine Light, in its present and progressive unfoldings of truth and duty to the mind, must be a fundamental principle in every right organization.



That this perfect liberty of conscience, is the right of every sane and accountable human being, appears from several other considerations. Mankind partake of the variety which every where marks the Creator's works. Though identical in the elements of their being, these elements exist in the race in infinitely diversified proportions. Hence their individuality, their peculiarities of character. Again: they are each subject to influences as diversified as their mental and physical peculiarities—all which affect their character, their views, their actions. This diversity furnishes occasion for a most profitable exercise of some of the finest feelings and affections of our nature—tenderness, kindness, tolerance. From the universality of the facts in the case, the practice of these virtues is obligatory on all, and no institution can be Christian—can exemplify love to God and man—(the substance of Christianity)—that is deficient in these virtues. “Christianity,” says an enlightened writer, “respects this diversity in men—aiming not to undo but further God's will; not fashioning all men after one pattern—to think alike, act alike, be alike, even look alike. It is something far other than Christianity which demands that. A Christian church then should put no fetters on the man; it should have unity of purpose, but with the most entire freedom for the individual. When you sacrifice the man to the mass in church or state—church or state becomes an offence, a stumbling-block in the way of progress, and must end or mend. The greater the variety of individualities in church or state, the better is it—so long as all are really manly, humane, and accordant. A Church must needs be partial, not catholic, where all men think alike—narrow and little.” It has been the want of this broad and Christian ground of toleration that has been the bane of every church, Catholic and Protestant. In proportion to its absence, despotic and oppressive measures have marred the harmony and painfully defeated the objects of religious society.

Another cause of the exercise of despotic power in professed Christian churches, has been the establishment of an ascending scale of authority of larger bodies over smaller, terminating in a Head or Supreme Controlling Power. This, we are persuaded, has been a prominent cause of the difficulties which have been experienced in the Society of Friends, at different periods of its history, and especially of the divisions which have occurred within the last quarter of a century.

In the establishment of Preparative, Monthly, Quarterly, and

Yearly Meetings, it was, doubtless, not contemplated, in the early periods of the Society, that any despotic authority should be exercised by larger meetings over smaller. The only power intended to be exercised, appears to have been that of persuasion and love. But the history of the Society shows how easy it is to abuse power, when men have incautiously been vested with it, by the expressed or implied rules of a written code. And the experience of the past admonishes us to recur to original fundamental ground, in regard to the design of religious association, and remove from it an element demonstrably evil in its tendency and results—the *subordination of meetings*, or the vesting of larger meetings with authority over smaller. As in a right organization the man can not be sacrificed to the mass, the individual conscience to an assemblage of consciences; so neither can a number of individual consciences in a congregation rightfully be sacrificed to a larger assembly, or any assumed or established head. The order of independent congregations therefore, has opened, with great unanimity and clearness, as most in harmony with man's nature and rights, and least liable to abuse.

Each congregation or meeting, will consequently attend to its own internal or disciplinary concerns. Larger meetings—Quarterly or Yearly—will be for *counsel and advice*, and for the consideration and promotion of the great interests of humanity—every thing that concerns man at large—including of consequence the removal of the existing evils of the day, War, Slavery, Intemperance, Licentiousness, or in whatever form cruelty, injustice, and other perverted principles may operate. Yearly meetings may suggest rules or regulations for the government of particular meetings or congregations, but shall have no power to enforce.

Another fruitful cause of difficulty and disaffection, has been the institution of Meetings of Ministers and Elders. Of these we propose the discontinuance, as also of the practice of recommending or ordaining ministers. Every meeting or congregation will attend to the regulation of the ministry among themselves: and if any one proposing to travel to a distance, wishes a certificate of moral character, it can be granted for the time being.

Not only will the equality of woman be recognized, but so perfectly, that in our meetings, larger and smaller, men and women will meet together and transact business jointly.

These principles, simply carried out, will, we apprehend, effectually prevent the abuses and evils of ecclesiastical organizations.

And should they at any time fail to be exemplified in the practice of a meeting toward any of its members, the evil would be limited, and not very oppressive, as any member affected by it, would be at liberty to join another congregation, and still participate in the privileges of the general association.

Two evils at least, if not wholly excluded, would find but scanty soil to grow in—*Tyranny* and *Sectarianism*. And these will be the more effectually prevented by the recognition of the great principle, already adverted to, of perfect liberty of conscience—which, in our view, forbids the establishing of any thing as a barrier to religious fellowship, either as regards individuals or the inter-communication of congregations, but the violation of the great unchangeable principles of morals, revealed, as facts of consciousness, to the universal human mind—Reverence of God, Justice, Mercy, Benevolence, Veracity, Chastity, &c. In other words, nothing but what is plainly incompatible with *love to God*, and *love to man*—leaving each to the test: “By their fruits ye shall know them,” independently of abstract opinions. Thus a brother or sister might hold the doctrine of the Trinity, or of a Vicarious Atonement—might practice Water Baptism, the ceremony of Bread and Wine, and kindred rituals, or he might believe none of these, and his right should be recognized to preach his conscientious convictions of these matters in any of our meetings—each, in either case, conceding the right of every other brother and sister, who may deem that error has been promulgated, to endeavor, in the pure spirit of love and kindness, to make it apparent, either before the same congregation, or in any of our meetings where they apprehend themselves called upon to do so. Thus, by the recognition of equal rights, and the sacredness of conscience, and of the duty of reciprocal kindness, a narrow sectarianism and party feeling would vanish before the light of truth, and the minds of the sincere and pious be more and more united. Nothing would be found so potent to promote unanimity of sentiment and brotherly love, as action based on these Divine principles. Under their influence a censorious and contentious spirit would find no place, the governing desire would be the attainment of truth. And thus would be verified the words of the excellent Isaac Penington—“It is not the different practice from one another that breaks the peace and unity, but the judging one another because of differing practices.”

We may advert to yet another great evil, which, in the church

order we have defined, must receive an effectual check. We mean *Priestcraft*. This naturally grows out of a dependence on our fellow beings, as possessing superior means of Divine knowledge. In this dependence individual talents are neglected, and individual responsibility is sought to be transferred to the person or persons on whom the dependence rests. And this dependence gives Power to those on whom it is placed, and makes those who place it easy subjects for its exercise. In this way a large proportion of the professors of religion become, to a greater or less extent, the dupes of priestcraft. The same effect takes place, to a certain extent, among Friends, as the consequence of *recommending ministers*, as it is called; that is, setting them apart, by a particular process, as ministers of the Society. By this practice—which is a virtual ordination—the idea naturally obtains, that those thus distinguished have nearer access to the Divine Mind—superior means of Divine knowledge, than others. This leads to an improper dependence on them, and a consequent neglect on the part of the other members of their own spiritual gifts. Here great injury is sustained, both by the preachers and those who thus defer to them; and by the non-employment of individual gifts, in the inculcation of moral and religious truth, the body and community at large suffer inculcable loss.

Intimately connected with the right use of the gifts of every member, is the mode of conducting assemblies for spiritual edification and improvement—of which we will here say a word. Agreeably to the facts before stated, and the objects of religious association, every accountable human being stands in such a relation to the Divine Mind, as to be privileged to receive, from the Fountain of Wisdom and Goodness, immediate instruction relative to all the duties of life, personal and social. The responsibility in respect to these duties being personal, and not transferable, no one can appoint another to act for him in their fulfilment. Fidelity to God can be maintained only by individual obedience to Divine requiring. No society arrangement can be right, which admits not of this obedience. No man has a right to absolve himself from it. In view of these important truths, we deem that a true church organization does not admit of placing one or more persons over a congregation as the stated spiritual teacher, or teachers. Consistently with individual rights and responsibilities, all must meet together as brethren, recognizing one Divine Teacher, and leaving the mind of each free, to speak

or be silent, according to his highest perceptions of duty, and in agreement with a just estimate of each other's equal rights. Thus may the gifts of all be exercised in the promotion of truth and goodness, and, while they are improved "by reason of use," the body will "edify itself in love."

Associating on these principles, we have concluded to hold a Yearly Meeting, in Friends' Meeting-house, known as Junius, (now Waterloo,) Seneca County, New York, commencing on Second-day, the 4th of 6th month next, 1849, at 11 o'clock in the morning: and we recommend that Friends, in their different meetings, who may be prepared for the measure, appoint representatives accordingly. And we further invite all, of whatever name or wherever scattered, who unite in the principles of the foregoing basis of association, to be present and participate with us in the objects contemplated—to promote truth, piety, righteousness, and peace in the earth. That all may find in the endearments of Religious Society a HOME for their spirits, and that, by a union of effort, virtue and happiness may be diffused in the human family, and God be glorified, who is over all, blessed forever.

Signed on behalf of the Conference.

THOMAS M'CLINTOCK, }  
RHODA DE GARMO, } *Clerks.*